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COMOR-D-25/15

NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

12 December 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

SUBJECT: Recommendation for TACKLE Missions

Attached for the consideration of COMOR at its meeting on
13 December is a draft paper submitted by the CIA Representative,

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James Q. Reber
Chairman
Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

1 Attachment
Subject paper

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COMOR-D-25/15

12 December 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, United States Intelligence Board

SUBJECT: Recommendation for TACKLE Mission

BACKGROUND

1. A recommendation is contained in paragraph 7. The remaining TACKLE Mission for which approval has been given is for South China. This mission is specifically designed to cover any military build-up pertinent to North Vietnam and Laos. Missions to cover the Szechwan Basin and the Taiwan Strait area have been approved in principle.

2. The Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance considers that with the successful accomplishment of the North Korean mission, South China is still the primary target. However, the weather pattern in the area suggests that we may too long delay coverage of other important targets if we hold a mission until we stand a 75 per cent chance of obtaining good photography of the South China border and the pertinent access routes and military installations.

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CONCLUSION

5. COMOR concludes that since each of the three areas described above, South China, the Szechwan Basin and the Taiwan Strait coast of Communist China pose peculiar weather problems, the order of coverage should be dependent on this factor. Unless multiple missions are approved, successful coverage of any of the three areas will require a 75 per cent probability of clear weather over the area designated. In the case of South China, a specific track has been approved by the Special Group. As stated above, the Szechwan Basin is roughly defined as lying between Chungking, Chengtu, and Ipin; but

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a greater area should be searched. At present a shallow mission from Swatow to Ninghsien should be adequate for the Taiwan Strait coverage.

8. The final factor considered by COMOR is that these three targets lie within different weather areas. In other words, COMOR concludes it would be most unlikely to find acceptable weather at more than one area within two or three days so it is unlikely that South China would be missed while the Taiwan Strait or the Szechwan Basin were being covered.

RECOMMENDATION

7. COMOR recommends that the Szechwan Basin and the Taiwan Strait coastal area be added to the South China approval and that the order of coverage be determined by the availability of 75 per cent good weather in each of the three areas, bearing in mind the order of priority (South China, Szechwan Basin, Taiwan Strait) should weather break in more than one area.

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